

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Corey D. Jepson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "REDUCING OVER-CLASSIFICATION ACT OF 2007"

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, today all Democratic members of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing & Terrorism Risk Assessment are introducing legislation that will put the Department of Homeland Security on the path to better information sharing by turning back the tide of over-classification that imperils our ability to make America safer from terrorism.

The "Reducing Over-Classification Act of 2007" (ROC Act) gives Congress the tools to curtail the federal government's widespread and mushrooming practice of classifying practically everything that moves.

Almost three and a half years ago, the 9/11 Commission made clear the urgent need to eliminate the over-classification of intelligence information by the Federal Government.

The Commissioners found that over-classification interferes with the sharing of critical information between the Federal Government and its State, local, and tribal partners on the front lines of our nation's homeland security efforts.

Sadly, the numbers tell us that we're still not heeding the 9/11 Commission's warning.

According to the Information Security Oversight Office at the National Archives, the number of new classification actions jumped from eight million in 2001 to 14 million in 2005. During the same period, the quantity of declassified pages dropped from 100 million in 2001 to 29 million in 2005.

To make matters worse, we learned this past year that some agencies were withdrawing archived records from public access and reclassifying them.

Together with the exponential growth in the amount of material that is classified, we've seen the level of spending on classification go up considerably.

In 2001, \$4.5 billion was spent on classification but by 2004, we were spending \$7.1 billion.

In addition, there has been a troubling proliferation of new policies and labels to limit the distribution of sensitive but unclassified information across the Federal Government.

At the Federal level alone, there are over 28 distinct policies for the protection of this "SBU" information.

Unlike with classified records, there is no monitoring of or reporting on the use of SBU information markings or its consequences.

The proliferation of these SBU "pseudo-classifications" interferes with interagency information sharing—increasing the cost of information security and limiting public access.

It's also an obstacle to sharing information with our first preventers and first responders in the field—precisely what the 9/11 Commission warned against.

During this session, Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Intelligence that I chair has held numerous hearings and received invaluable input from subject matter experts on what first steps to take to address the twin problems of over- and pseudo-classification.

The bill we're introducing today reflects that input.

The goal is simple: make the Department of Homeland Security the "gold standard" when it comes to preventing over-classification and to limiting the use of sensitive but unclassified markings.

The only way to ensure that the Department gets it right going forward is to promote an enforceable and understandable strategy that applies to everyone.

DHS is an excellent place to start and—if it gets a handle on its own burgeoning over- and pseudo-classification addiction—can become a "best practices" center and the test bed for the rest of the Federal Government.

Accordingly, our bill will require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a strategy that will: allow the classification of documents only after unclassified, shareable versions of intelligence have been produced; develop a new "sensitive and shared" information program that will provide protections for certain sensitive and unclassified information for limited periods of time under narrowly tailored circumstances; propose new incentives and disincentives to encourage Department personnel to classify documents properly and to use "sensitive and shared" markings sparingly; create training programs and auditing mechanisms for all Department employees in order to ensure that the Strategy is being implemented properly; establish an independent Department declassification review board to expedite the declassification of documents when the need for public access outweighs the need to classify; and propose legislative solutions to ensure that the Strategy is implemented in a way that not only promotes security but also fosters both information sharing and the protection of privacy and other civil rights.

Our Subcommittee plans to move this legislation early next year and hopes our colleagues in the House will join us in the effort to ensure that the Federal Government gets accurate and actionable information to those who need it in a timely fashion.

THE 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF CONRAD AND FRANCES GASKIN

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. McNULTY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Conrad and Frances Gaskin on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Both first generation African Caribbean Americans, Conrad and Frances met in elementary school and were married on September 14, 1957 at St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church in the Bronx. Conrad served in the United States Air Force before eventually working for the New York State Teacher's Retirement System. After receiving her doctorate from Fordham, Frances went on to found and serve as a professor for a program in nursing at the Hostos Community College at the City University of New York.

Moving to Albany in August of 1980, the Gaskins helped found an additional Church home in the Faith Community of the Black Apostolate. This later expanded to include St. Joan of Arc and Sacred Heart Churches of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, where both serve as Ministers of the Eucharist.

Committed to serving the community, Conrad and Frances continued to stay active and involved after retirement. Conrad coached basketball and swimming while Frances worked for the American Red of America Cross and is a Staff Officer with the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. They are blessed with three children and five grandchildren.

It is my honor to recognize Conrad and Frances Gaskin and provide my heartfelt congratulations to them on this wonderful event in their lives. I would like to extend my best wishes to the Gaskins and their family on their 50th wedding anniversary.

HONORING CPL TANNER O'LEARY

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to honor the life of CPL Tanner O'Leary, who died December 9, 2007, while serving his country in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Tanner, who was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division based in Fort Bragg, N.C., graduated from Timber Lake High School in 2003. He joined the Army in 2005. He graduated from infantry training in May 2005 and airborne school in June 2005.

The lives of countless people were enormously enhanced by Tanner's compassion and service. He represented the best of the United States, South Dakota, and the Army. His life continues to inspire all those who knew him and many who did not. Our Nation and the State of South Dakota are far better places because of his service.

Today, we remember and honor Tanner's noble service to the United States and the ultimate sacrifice he has paid with his life to defend our freedoms and foster liberty for others.

I would like to express my condolences to the family and friends of CPL Tanner O'Leary. His commitment to and sacrifice for our country will not be forgotten.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SANTA FE QUADRICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Santa Fe Quadricentennial Commemorative Coin Act. The minting of a commemorative coin will serve as a historic national tribute to the ever-distinct City Different.

Santa Fe was officially elevated by the Spanish settlers from a plaza to a capital city in 1610 and has continued to be a meeting